POETRY.

Taken from the Juvenile Reformer.

TOBACCO.

What makes my teeth from day to day,
Exhibit symptoms of decay,
With pain and anguish rot away?
Tobacco.

What makes my breath so fœtid, foul?
What makes the ladies on me scowl,
And shun me as they would an owl?
Tobacco.

What makes me, when I 'm called to speak,
Fly quick for fear my mouth will leak,
The spit-box or the door to seek?
Tobacco.

What is the cause of war and strife,
Between the good man and his wife,
Embittering every hour of life?
Tobacco.

What makes an appetite for rum,
And sends the drunkard staggering home,
And prematurely seals his doom?
Tobacco.

These are the facts—then let us shun
The weed that many has undone,
And our just vengeance wreak upon
Tobacco.

COMMON SCHOOL ASSISTANT.

PROSPECTUS.

The improvement of Common Schools is the exclusive object of this paper.—From statistical tables it can be seen, that only one pupil in twenty goes higher than the common school. This paper, therefore, will endeavor to assist nineteen out of twenty, of the children and youth of these United States, while they are acquiring the only education they are ever to receive.

The necessity of general knowledge and good morals, is admitted by every reflecting man; yet the great majority do not perceive, *that the Common Schools are the very sources of a nation's intelligence.* The education of this people, taken as a whole, must be that, and that only, which the common schools are prepared to give. In these primary schools, the nation receives its education and character. And when our safety lies only in the virtue and intelligence of the *whole* people, with common schools the empire and liberty of these states must stand or fall. They are at once *the sources and the guardians of freedom.*

Not only our civil, but our literary institutions—academies, colleges, and professional seminaries, are dependant on common schools. If the children in the common schools acquire a love for letters, a desire for higher improvement; if they, in the elementary schools, make their studies their delight, and the acquisition and possession of truth their purest and highest happiness, they will wish to go from the common school to the academy. In this land of facilities, if the primary school has given a right direction, neither parents nor poverty will be able to keep the youth from the highest degrees of literature and science. But if the children in the neglected, repulsive common schools, are made to hate instruction, and all the means of acquiring knowledge; if they, in the first steps of an education, find their studies a task and a punishment, they will not only avoid the common school as much as possible, but regard the academy and college with supreme abhorrence. All the allurements of friends will be useless, and the children will probably pass through life with that degree of ignorance which never wants knowledge. If our common schools were what they should be, they would take care of all the higher institutions. The friends, therefore, of these broader, nobler rivers of learning and intellect, shou'd not be unmindful of the springs which create and support. To make academies and colleges flourish, the first step must be taken in the common schools.

Again—it takes more than half of the collegiate course to supply what the elementary schools should, but do not teach, and to correct what they teach erroneously.

Good common schools are, also, necessary to sustain lyceums, libraries, and all associations for mutual improvement.—There must be considerable intelligence, and a love of knowledge, for these institutions to appeal to, and stand upon. If the elementary schools are good, the people will be prepared to sustain these useful associations; but if otherwise, the community may know enough to desire, but not enough to establish or sustain them.

If a young man can receive a good common English education—such an education as every common school ought to give—he has the power of making the highest attainments. Self-education, with the assistance of the higher institutions, is the best education; and the self-instructor needs only a sound elementary beginning. If the common schools assisted the people as they should, we might see a greater number of those great self-educated men who rise to honor and bless the human race. The common schools now give nothing to the people to commence with, nothing to build upon.

All the moral movements of the day appeal to a good common school education for success. It is idle to distribute the Bible, if we are not able to read. Teaching us to read—*not merely to pronounce words*—but to read understandingly and with reflection, is one of the first moral and benevolent duties of christians and philanthropists. Many receive the Bible and tracts, who are not able even to spell the words, and many more, whose education has been so limited, or defective, that they are not profited by the words they pronounce; and, perhaps, by a little designing assistance, are misled into error and bigotry. We would rejoice to see every man possess and obey the Scriptures; but to distribute the Bible among those who are not able to read it intelligently, is not only making charity useless, but it is giving to ignorance and depravity the opportunity of misusing and despising that enlightened benevolence, which was intended, and might have been made, the greatest of blessings. There is a work to be done before we give the Bible, upon which much of the legitimate influence of this sacred book is dependent; and this work must be performed in the common schools. Whether the Bible Society shall be a blessing to the destitute, the ignorant and the outcast, or not, depends, in a great degree, upon the number and character of the common schools; for, be it remembered, they give to nineteen out of twenty all their ability to read and reflect.

The temperance effort is likewise dependent on common schools. Man will seek happiness. If he has it not mentally or morally, he will seek it physically.—Gratifying his animal nature for a while in the tippling-shop, may give him a momentary pleasure; but this does not satisfy him, and he resorts to an excessive gratification, which soon diseases his physical nature. And here is the chief cause of human vice and misery; a diseased physical nature, having the predominence over the mental and moral capacities. Reason and conscience, which had been given to him by his Creator to govern his appetites and passions, have never been unfolded or educated; they never received strength enough to overcome the lower natures, and the day of education is past. The unfortunate being has no other capacity for happiness, than in the indulgence of his grosser appetites. If he signs the temperance pledge, the present allurements of life are such, that his appetite to indulge is stronger than his resolution to abstain, and he too often adds the sin of broken vows to the sin of suicide. Our common schools should have such an elevated character, that they would give, to all, the sources of mental and moral happiness—Then there would not be such strong inducements to gratify the senses; then there would be a mental and moral standing in society; a persevering pride, a conscious shame, and a strength of resolution that would keep the person from the drunkard's fate. Should not the friends of temperance feel that they have a high duty to perform in the common school.

The good order and happiness of society are secured or lost, according to the character of the common schools. Gossiping, seeking pleasure by gratifying the bodily desires, arise from the want of intellectual entertainment. If all received a good elementary education, (and this includes thorough instruction in the principles of christianity,) they would find happiness within themselves, in reading and study, and in the cultivation and improvement of the heart and head. But society, without these higher and independent sources of happiness, is left to the destructive influence of tea-table tattle, drinking, horse-racing and the gambling-table.—But the educated have other subjects than their neighbors for conversation,—other sources than vicious places of resort, and neighborhood scandal, for amusement;—and other associates than the stupid and ignorant, or the vile and worthless. In good common schools, society may obtain that which will secure morality, industry and enterprize; but if the schools are worthless, society will lose *what it can obtain from no other source*, and the want of which will make the inhabitants weak, degraded and despised. Knowledge is power as well as happiness, and the intelligent community will always have the advantage of ignorance, and the respect of their fellow men. Let the districts and towns, then, improve their schools.

The common school should give the farmer a higher education; it should make him better acquainted with nature; more observing, more reflective. The fruitfulness of the soil does not depend so much upon its richness, as it does upon the intelligence of those who cultivate it. If farmers wish to benefit their lands, to increase their happiness or wealth, or elevate their standing in society, the first thing for them to do is, to improve their schools; to raise the character of the place where all their education is obtained; where the mind is developed, and the intellectual character of the neighborhood formed. A good school will make the rich soil a blessing, and the barren spot productive.

The mechanic should cultivate his mind, that his head may help his hands. Science will lessen and lighten his daily task. It will give him the power of making a better article and a better instrument, and it will make him a greater and a better man.

The merchant should have more enlarged views—more intellect. His employment, then, would never descend to a system of higgling, and the profession would be made as noble and commanding in its practice, as it is in its nature. Our schools are so poor, that they have not given to the majority of merchants that mental capital, that intellectual stock, which would be far more productive than crowded shelves with empty heads. And how much enjoyment is lost by making the means of happiness the end! The schools did not furnish a well balanced mind; there was something deficient or wrong when the character was forming, but it is now fixed for life.

Literary men feel the effects of erroneous and deficient early instruction through life. While in the college they lose much of their time in trying to conquer the vacant, desultory habits of mind which were formed in the common schools. The superficial methods of study, the entire disregard of any close or systematic application, and the mere verbal recitations of the district school, unfit them for thoroughness or extensive attainments. The vulgar pronunciation, false orthography, and frequent violations of grammar of the primary school, not unfrequently make their after efforts disgraceful and inefficient. Perceiving nothing distinctly in early life, being thorough in no one study at the commencement of their education, and constantly receiving knowledge in a confused manner without arranging their ideas, or expressing them in a clear, forcible style, is an admirable preparation for that hesitating, unintelligible communication of thought, so often witnessed in literary men. Our bad common schools either disqualify us for a literary life, or render that life one common struggle with our defects and errors. Every thing depends upon a correct, thorough beginning; and the literary part of the community who are now suffering from an improper early education, will strongly feel the necessity of improving the common schools.

The schools must be elevated that the people may not be deceived by the press. The periodicals which flood the land, frequently try to make "the worse appear the better reason," and the rogue the better man. Constituents cannot be personally acquainted with the candidates, and of necessity must obtain their knowledge of them through the press. But there is in almost every case too fair a representation by friends, and far too foul a one by enemies. On some subjects, in many parts of the country, the press is the sole agent in the formation and publication of opinion; and it may be made a strong engine of evil. This will certainly be its influence, unless the people are intelligent enough to detect its errors, and virtuous enough to be untouched by its corruption.

But what shall prepare the whole people to meet a free press? To educate is not the office of the press; its design and office is to convey information, not to educate. It pre-surposes an education, and appeals to the educated; and if the common schools have not given a sound, thinking, public mind, the blessings of the press are lost, and its influence will give power to a few to take away the rights of the many.

Then every thing that we prize and hold dear to our hearts; our prosperity—our social ties and blessings—our literary halls—our free, civil institutions—and our religious privileges, are looking to the common schools for growth, for greatness, *and for their very existence.* We, as a people, must be intelligent to make our laws, and virtuous to obey them; for the laws, however wise, will be entirely nugatory, unless we have intelligence to perceive their justice, and virtue to which they can appeal. The people are the sovereignty, and the sun of knowledge must shine upon all.

But how can every child and youth in this republic receive that *kind* and *degree* of instruction which our individual happiness and liberties demand? How can knowledge be carried to the door of every house, and to the capacities of every child? How shall mental growth and improvement keep pace with physical? How shall we, as a people, be great and powerful in MIND as well as in wealth? We answer, by sustaining a good school in every neighborhood—within a mile of every dwelling; and this the common school system can do. Then let us stand around this system to defend it, to perfect it, and to carry it into universal operation. The strong arm of government should be thrown around it for protection. The wisdom of legislation should watch over it with a parental solicitude, and every parent and teacher, and trustee and inspector, and school commissioner, should foster and watch over the common schools, with an untiring supervision, and unsleeping eye.

But, alas! do these schools receive that friendly sympathy, that intelligent aid, and that enlightening and fostering care, which their influence and vital importance demand? Do we not live as if our happiness, the peace of society, and the liberties of this nation, rested rather in our laws and constitutions, revenues and armies, than in the virtue and intelligence of the people? Do not many of the leading, prominent men, overlook the common school, and give their intelligence and patronage to private schools, academies and colleges, making the common school a disreputable thing? Do not the commissioners and inspectors neglect to visit the schools as the law requires? Do not inspectors give certificates to applicants who have not a solitary qualification for the profession? And as the schools will be like their teachers, are not the school funds almost lost, by being squandered on teachers who are an evil rather than a good to the schools? Do the trustees—the local officers—attend to the necessaries of the school? Do not parents pay more to those who work on the farm or in the shop, than they do to those who give their children their education and character?—Do the parents visit the schools and sympathize with and assist the teacher? Do not the teachers make teaching a *temporary* thing? How many of them make their employment their study—their profession? How many teachers can look into the operations of the infant mind—can sympathize with children, and know how to make them think? How many teachers, in moral character, are fit models for children? and out of the few who are qualified, how many can *impart* knowledge to the infant intellect? Are the schoolhouses properly located, and is the structure healthy and commodious? Are the text and class-books adapted to the capacities and attainments of the children? Has the school room a suitable apparatus?

Further, do the children learn much of a practical, useful nature? Do they *so learn* that which will help them to higher attainments in after life? In learning to read, does not the pupil acquire the habit of articulating indistinctly; of uttering with great confusion the letters in the word, without dividing them into syllables; or of precipitating syllable upon syllable, and words upon words? Does he not in his first lessons begin to drawl or trail the letters; to abridge or prolong the words, and to pitch the voice into an unnatural key? And does not reading consist in merely pronouncing words—the whole exercise little else than verbiage?

In Arithmetic, can the pupils make an application of the examples of the book, or give a reason for one of the rules they commit? And what is the penmanship, if you do not furnish the made pen, the ruled book, the school desk, and the round copy plate?

Is the study of Geography much more than committing the words of the book to memory? Do the pupils transfer the mind from the words to the objects described?

Is not the study of Grammar, also, a mere exercise of the memoriter and *guessing* faculties? Do not children commit the words of the grammar, and then *guess* out the parts of speech and syntax? Do they learn any thing of the philosophy of the language—any thing of its primitives, idioms, or genius? Do they correct their colloquial violations of grammar? And is the choice and collocation of words, the phraseology, the force and beauty of expression, any better after studying grammar in the common school than it was before? *Is it not all compulsory, unmeaning and almost useless?*

The common schools, in their present low state, pretend to teach nothing but what we have mentioned—the mere instruments of knowledge,—and it is seen by a little examination how defectively these are taught. Do these schools teach any thing which makes the man? any thing of agriculture, of mechanics, or of the growth and health of vegetables and animals? Do the common schools, as they are now conducted, teach the children any thing of their social duties, of their duties as public officers, of their duties to their country, or of its history, laws, and constitutions, or of their duties to themselves and their Creator? What, then, do our common schools teach? *A little smattering of a few instruments of knowledge*—that, which the demagogue, the imposter, and the fanatic would like taught; for these agitators choose to have the people half educated; enough to read what they say; but not enough to know whether it is true or not—not enough to make the people thinking, inquiring, reasoning independent men. By no means; the demagogue and the imposter must look at the common schools with infinite pleasure; they must see much to encourage their arts, and invite them to action!

Something must be done. There have been of late some fearful warnings, and no patriot will doubt or hesitate *now.*—The school funds in some of the states are large enough; the more the people themselves do directly for the schools, the better will be their supervision. Legislation is not what we want in several of the states. But one thing is wanted, and it must be done throughout the Union.—PUBLIC SENTIMENT MUST BE ENLIGHTENED. An informed public opinion must do that for the cause of popular education, which it has done for the cause of temperance. We might have legislated on intemperance up to the present moment, but what good would it have done? There were laws, wholesome and strong, against this vice, before the public voice was heard. But what influence had these laws? How inefficient will the best laws be when public opinion is wrong? Laws seldom change opinions, but opinions change laws. Get public sentiment right, and there is no fear but what the laws will be obeyed. Light, then, must be poured upon the public mind. The indifference and apathy of parents—the want of preparation in teachers—the laxity and unfaithfulness of the school officers, must be published till they are heard and felt by every citizen. Every thing must be done, that will induce the people to co-operate with the school system—*Wanting* this co-operation, the system may be admirable in its external organization, and *yet not work well.* The internal regulations, those which are of the most importance, and which are, under the present state of things, necessarily left to the people, have been criminally neglected. And in a democratic government, it is doubtful whether any thing but the controling voice of public opinion, can reach the internal affairs of the school.

The columns of this paper will be opened to the intelligent and the experienced; and we respectfully request such to make this periodical the able and enlightened friend, the advocate and the "assistant" of our common schools. He who supplies deficiencies, remedies evils, or gives mental and moral light to his fellow beings, bestows the greatest blessings that man can give. He who improves common schools, where the people are educated, is the warmest friend of freedom;—for to educate us is to make us free.—Those who have enlightened mankind, and diffused useful knowledge through the whole community, have been the greatest philanthropists of their race, for we know of no benevolence so exalted as that which pours light and truth into the immortal mind. Those who wish their country to take a high standing among the nations of the earth; who desire the growing greatness and prosperity of their countrymen; and who wish the perpetuity of this noble example of liberty and self-government, will do all in their power to improve the People's Schools. We can serve our country by defending her constitutions, by fighting her battles, and by contributing to her revenues; but never do we serve her so nobly, so effectually, as we do when we strengthen the minds and morals of her citizens. We therefore earnestly invite the Patriot, Philanthropist, and the Christian, to make this cheap paper what it ought to be, and to assist in giving it a place in every family and school house in the Union. The Editor will do all he can for the work;—making it, to the schools of this country, the organ of information of the school systems and school books of the more enlightened nations of Europe, that we may be benefitted by all the improvements which are made abroad. Each of the Prussian and French schools receives a weekly paper and a monthly magazine;—these periodicals the editor receives, and this sheet will occasionally give such extracts as are adapted to our feelings and the spirit of our institutions. We shall endeavor to collect and publish statistical information, with the improvements that are made in the cause of education in the United States, and also to show, what in our view are the defects of the school systems, adopted by each of the states. And as the editor will receive the assistance of learned experienced friends of education, this paper will endeavor, respectfully, to remind the local officers of the schools, of the greatness of the trust committed to them, and also offer some humble assistance in the performance of their high duties. It will show some of the evils of ignorance, and advantages of knowledge, and assist parents in the difficult and responsible duties of educating their children. It will be an "assistant" to teachers, and endeavor to make their profession as honorable and well rewarded as it is useful and important. Hints as to the requisite qualifications of teachers, the best methods of teaching, and the forms of school government, will be given by teachers of age and reflection. The location and structure of school houses will receive attention, and the best text and class-books for common schools will be examined and spoken of according to the editor's opinions of their merits.

These are the leading objects of this paper—and it is intended by the friends of education to give it such a *judicious, practical* character, that the benevolent will feel (the work being offered at the actual cost) their time well bestowed in asking each family to take a copy in their respective circles.

ATTEMPTED ARSON AT THE AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY HOUSE—Early on Saturday morning of last week, some incendiary attempted to set fire to the premises occupied by the American Bible Society, Nassau street. A night watch has been kept on the premises since last December, and this duty is performed during the first part of the night by a clerk named Williams, who is relieved at one o'clock in the morning by a man named Menahan, who resides in the basement of the building. On Friday night, Williams left his two brothers, aged about 16 and 19 years, to keep watch in his place, who left the premises about one o'clock, and when Menahan came up stairs between 1 and 2 o'clock, he perceived that the first door was not fastened, and on going into the office he found a parcel of newspapers which had been dipped in oil and set fire to, lying on the floor, all the books and papers thrown about; the desk, in which was the key of the iron chest, broke open, and the iron chest unlocked and rifled of what cash was in it—about $20. The two young men who kept watch during the early part of the night were examined at the Police Office on Saturday, but nothing transpired to implicate them in any way whatever, nor has there as yet been any clue discovered of the incendiary.—*Jour. of Com.*

FREE DISCUSSION. "Every species of intolerance which enforces suppression and silence, and every species of persecution which enforces such injunctions, is adverse to the progress of truth; forasmuch as it refuses that to be fixed by one set of men at one time, which is much better and with more probability of success, left to the independent and progressive inquiry of separate individuals. Truth results from discussion and controversy; is investigated by the labors and researches of private persons. Whatever therefore prohibits these, obstructs that industry and that liberty, which it is the common interest of mankind to promote."—*Paley.*

WHAT A LITTLE BOY CAN DO.

Mr Editor,—When passing through the town of R——, a few days since, I became familiar with an interesting little boy, not quite eight years old. George A——, for that was his name—was a strong advocate for the temperance cause, and it being a day or two after the meeting of the tectotalers, George took the paper to obtain signers. He came to me with a cheerful countenance, and said, I have got ten names to-day. Ten names for what? not to drink any thing, was the answer. May they not take a little rum? no—Wine? no—Cider? no, nothing that gets folks drunk. George's paper was headed by their good minister,—and when I saw him a day or two after, he had by his own exertion obtained thirty-eight names. It was interesting to see a child of his age so earnestly engaged to suppress an evil which those of a riper age had labored years to cherish. Indeed it must be a time of reform, if children and youth are thus engaged in the cause of temperance. I should be glad to find a little George A—— in every place.—*S. S. Adv.*

RIGHT—RIGHT.—A minister brother, in this state, writes to us, that during an illness of his wife, he cooked his own victuals, rather than employ slave labor. This is right. We say to all ministers who would "lift up holy hands" in the sanctuary, "touch not the unclean thing" of slavery.—*St. Louis Obs.*

He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are an abomination to the Lord.—*Solomon.*

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE FROM JAMAICA.

Such is our own knowledge of the source from which we derived the interesting and cheering accounts of the state of things in Jamaica, that we need no confirmation to assure us that the picture we attempted to give of the benign effects of emancipation there, falls far short of reality. Yet we love to have the same presented in various aspects. And to others additional evidence may impart additional confidence. With these views we take pleasure in presenting the following extract of a letter from a respectable merchant of this city, a member of the Moravian church in Fulton-street, now residing in Jamaica for his health.—*New York Evangelist.*

NEW FULNEC, Dec. 22, 1835.

"Among the innumerable tokens of my Savior's goodness to me of late, his directing my steps hither I place among the chief. Could you only, my dear brother, yourself be a witness to the scenes and events about us! What a missionary's life and labors were, I never before had a conception of—they are incessant, in season and out of season, in fair and tempestuous weather, by day and by night, ever continued and never finished. The poor negroes of all ages and both sexes, as an hour becomes their own, hasten with eager step to his door, conscious that he is ever open, and himself ever ready to impart instruction or administer comfort.—Thus, at almost all hours of the day, but particularly from 4 o'clock P. M. when their labor ceases, until 10 at night, groups of these precious souls are seen wending their way, over cliff and dale, to the mission premises. No distance, no weather, or darkness of the night deters, neither precipitous roads, covered with sharp flinty stone and rock, which must often pierce their feet, (for they have no shoes,) can repress their desire to gain a word of instruction. When they break up and retire, particularly now, when the children meet to practice anthems for Christians, they make vocal the mountains and valleys with the praises of their redeemer's love. It is truly affecting to see that our dear congregation, every member, all who love Zion, could see and witness these wonderful doings of the Lord, how would their warmest emotions be excited! how the anxious wish thrill in every fibre of their heart to do something in this glorious cause! And more so, more so, when they further learned that hundreds, perhaps thousands, pant to participate in these blessings, are prevented for want of wherewith to hide their nakedness. My fellow members and brethren in the Lord Jesus, pity these poor outcasts for whom Christ died! Thirty or forty cents will buy a decent cover or shift, and enable the children to attend and hear, and learn to read the word of life. My dear brother, the wants of this people cry to Heaven. Could they be sung in the ears of our rich luxurious city! Oh! that some appeal at least could be made, that would reach the case and respond to the cries and necessities of the occasion!"

NOTE. In the island of Jamaica there were, at the close of 1834, under the care of the United Brethren, at 8 missionary stations, 7182 negroes, of which number 1559 were children. Since that time the number has increased, and the children attending the mission schools

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THE NEW YORK WEEKLY MESSENGER—Edited by *B. Badger*, and published every Wednesday by *Abbott & Boggs*, at No. 17 Ann-street.—Anxious to promote love to God and good will to man, the Weekly Messenger has been established on the broad ground of Christian charity. It claims allegiance to every good word and work—yet cannot stoop to recognise those lines of party distinction which divide the great mass of the religious community into clans. This indifference to sectarian prejudices is founded on the belief that the differences between the various denominations of Christians, who take the Bible, without addition, diminution, or distortion, as the standard of their faith, is more apparent than real.—Pledged to no single party, the Messenger holds itself in readiness to do the worthy bidding of all; to rejoice with those that rejoice, & sympathize with those that mourn. But in everything admitted to its columns, the highest regard will be had to the purity and force of the moral impressions intended to be left on the mind of the reader. Religion, virtue, morals, literature, science, and philanthropy, may claim an interest in the fulfilment of the editorial pledges of the Messenger.

☞ The price of the paper to single subscribers is $2 50 a year, if paid in advance, or within three months from the commencement of the subscription. But if payment be delayed until the end of the year, *three dollars* will be charged.
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